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D E F E N C E

O F

Mr. KENRICK's REVIEW

O F

Dr. JOHNSON's SHAKESPEARE:

CONTAINING A NUMBER OF

CURIOUS AND LUDICROUS ANECDOTES

O F

LITERARY BIOGRAPHY,

K. R. R.
B Y A F R I E N D.

John Kenrick
LAUGH; for you *must*: be candid, if you can,

POPE

L O N D O N,

Printed for S. BLADON, in Pater-noster Row,

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P R E F A C E.

THE formality with which this little performance is divided into sections, and illustrated with notes, may possibly give umbrage to the more sprightly and volatile criticks of the present times. This method, however, was chosen, lest any confusion should arise in the minds of readers of little attention and short memories, from the writer's unnoticed transition from one thing to another, in treating of those various subjects, high and low, serious and comick, general and personal, which are contained in the following sheets.

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By this method, also, the convenience of those persons is suited, whose time may possibly be too precious to admit of their perusing the whole, and yet may have an itching curiosity to look at some particular part.

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D E F E N C E
O F

Mr. KENRICK's REVIEW

Dr. JOHNSON's SHAKESPEARE.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

WHAT a well-bred age do we live in? Time was, when writers might boldly call in question the abilities of each other, without incurring the censure of *malignity*, or even sometimes forfeiting their title to distinguished urbanity; when the meanest individual in the Republic of Letters had a right to bring the charge of *ignorance* or *inattention* against the proudest champion that ever brandished goose-quill; when he might cite the accused to appear at the bar of the publick, and give testimony in plain terms against him without ceremony or equivocation. Time was, I say, when this impartial tribunal also, attentive only to the matter of fact and the evidence laid before it,

B

passed

passed sentence on the *convicted* without respect of persons, honouring the prosecutor with its thanks and protection, as a friend to justice and the interests of literature.

How different is the case at present! when the sanction of a literary reputation, however obtained, is similar to a certain political privilege, however acquired; though it be notorious that ignorance and partiality operate as powerfully in the one case, as bribery and corruption are sometimes supposed to do in the other. But when the candidates are once chaired, and their opponents have not influence enough to get them expelled, it is theirs to sit in judgment on their fellow subjects, and give laws to the world of letters.

It is well, however, for the progress of *Science*, and the independency of *Wit*, that the Session of the Literary Junto is not so firmly established as that of the political. They are both provided, indeed, with their ushers and serjeants respectively; but, however tremendous may be the magisterial authority of the one, nothing can be more ridiculous than the critical mock-majesty of the other.

The author of the Review of Dr. Johnson's *Shakespeare* hath, it seems, been committed to the custody of these literary mirmidons, and formally proceeded against for a breach of privilege. The Doctor, we are told, was above being called to account by any private individual whatever; it being the highest indignity to the *majority* even to suspect the inability of a writer, whom they had been pleased to vote *infallible*.

As

As a friend to the *Reviewer*, therefore, I take up the pen to defend his cause, and assert the right of every citizen in the Republick of Letters, to think and write freely. To this I am particularly incited also, from a due sense that such freedom is become absolutely necessary to support the present interests of literature; which are daily drooping under the dead weights of indolence, partiality, and prepossession.

I am not insensible that these obstacles to the progress of science, and the advancement of letters, are commonly called by other names. I well know that, in this age of civility and false refinement, mere COURTESY is termed *candour*, CEREMONY is called *politeness*, QUAINTESS *elegance*, PEDANTRY *erudition*, and DULLNESS *decency* and *decorum*. On the other hand, SINCERITY is termed *insult*, CENSURE is called *cruelty*, and WIT and HUMOUR *petulance* and *ill-manners*. In the mean time a zeal for *truth* is looked upon as a kind of canine madness; and a heart-felt veneration for true genius and learning is despised as a literary phrenzy. Thus are we degenerated from our forefathers; from the wits and philosophers of those ages which produced a Shakespeare, a Bacon, a Dryden, and a Milton; whom instead of imitating, we exert all our little abilities to depreciate, and level with the diminutive standard of the present times. A late noble writer observes, respecting our moral and political character, that we are now-a-days so far from having the *virtues* of great men, that we have not even their *vices*; every thing, says he, is little, mean, and pitiful among us. This might with greater justice be said of our

literary character; our taste for works of real genius, true science, and solid erudition, being almost dwindled into nothing. In the mean time we see the petty pretenders to wit and learning industriously forming themselves into parties for the support of each other, because they find themselves unable to stand alone. Imbecillity naturally tends to render people complacent and civil; while the cunning, usually attendant on ignorance, artfully teaches them to make a merit of their weakness, and to impute even their pusillanimity to candour and benevolence.

It is no wonder that a writer, who hath the fortitude alone to attack one of the greatest of these partial and illiberal combinations, should create himself a number of enemies; nor is it indeed a wonder that the impartial publick should, for a while, be misled by the self interested clamours, which so numerous a body of partisans may raise against him. It is boldly presumed, however, that if the publick should fully and coolly enquire into the real state of the case, the motives for such attack, and the merits and demerits of the parties assailed and defended, they will not only acquit the Reviewer of the false charges of illiberality and malignity brought against him; but will be ready to acknowledge that the chastisement Dr. Johnson hath received at his hands, is no less defensible with regard to its severity, than it is justifiable in respect to its cause.

S E C T. II.

Reasons for the Reviewer's having a less exalted opinion of Dr. J's abilities than has been entertained by the publick in general.

THERE is nothing which, at first sight, gives us greater offence or disgust, than to see those persons or characters, for whom we have been used to entertain a certain degree of respect, treated with familiarity or contempt. Nor is it at all necessary to this end, that such treatment should on their part be merited. It is enough that we are ignorant of their demerits ; of which it is afterwards very difficult to convince us, even by the strongest testimony. We are by no means easily reconciled to such an instance of our want of sagacity, as that of having long entertained a favourable opinion, much less a kind of reverence, for an object unworthy of it. We are apt to hesitate, therefore, at the most flagrant proofs of our mistake, and even to take offence at any supposed indignity offered to such characters, as if it in some measure affected ourselves.

This hath been remarkably the case in the present affair of Mr. K's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakespeare ; even those, who could not fail of being convinced of the justice of the Reviewer's remarks, finding in themselves something repugnant to the ludicrous and sarcastical manner in which Mr. K. had thought proper to reprehend this editor. Admitting for the present, however, that the cause of such reprehension was just, they cannot

cannot fail, on reflection, to impute that repugnance to their prepossession in favour of Dr. J. and their ignorance of the Reviewer's having still farther motives for his severity, than appeared on the face of his pamphlet.

That none of these motives were personal, the Reviewer hath repeatedly and publickly declared. What they were, may be gathered from this and the following sections.

The Reviewer, it seems, had been some years abroad, when he first heard of the publication of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary ; a work of which he had formed the highest expectations from the supposed abilities and great reputation of its author. At the same time, being apprehensive that his own application to the use of foreign languages might, in some measure, corrupt that of his native tongue, he procured Dr. J's apparently elaborate performance, in order to correct both his memory and judgment, as either might occasionally fail him. Having thus, during an interval of several years, had more frequent occasions to consult an English dictionary, than possibly would have happened to him in any other situation, he could not fail of being greatly surprized and disappointed at the many palpable and gross mistakes which had escaped this celebrated lexicographer. He was not so unreasonable to expect, indeed, that, in a work of such extent, a number of trivial, and perhaps some important errors, should not escape the most attentive and industrious compiler. He could neither expect, however, nor overlook such an amazing number of blunders and inconsistencies in etymology, orthoepy, idiom and grammatical construction,

struction, as were to be found in a work, which was boasted of as a capital undertaking, and recommended to foreigners as a standard of the English language.

He would have been careless of the honour, and wanting to the literature of his country *, had he not every where taken a proper occasion, therefore, to speak of the defects and imperfections of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. At the same time, that he might not be thought to depreciate the labours of another, without sufficient cause, he amused himself occasionally with forming a table of *errata* to that performance, intending some time or other to offer it to the proprietors; and, in case of their refusal to accept it, to lay it before the publick.

The Reviewer's list of errors was pretty copious when he returned to England; since when, having applied more closely to literary matters, he hath increased it almost tenfold, and that by no means to the honour of Dr. Johnson's boasted erudition and profound knowledge of the English tongue.

This detection of the *Lexicographer* induced the Reviewer to make a closer examination, than he had before done, into the compositions of the *writer*; in which were found the same traces of *inattention* to the idiom of our tongue, and of his imperfect acquaintance with other modern languages. In the mean time, he

* Especially as he observed that succeeding dictionary-writers, both abroad and at home, implicitly adopted the most egregious errors on the authority of Johnson. Sufficient proof of this may be had by an examination of Bailey's Dictionary, improved by Scott; Baretti's Italian and English Dictionary, and others.

was found to be eternally aiming at the introduction of Latinisms, and other vicious modes of expression, by way of *enriching* our tongue; but thereby corrupting it, as he himself says of Shakespeare, 'by almost every mode of depravation.'

In his productions of imagination, his invention appeared weak and languid. It exerted itself, indeed, now and then with tolerable success in a *dream* or vision; but it was hardly ever wide awake, without seeming fatigued with its efforts toward vigility, and involuntarily dropping into a doze again. As to his works of knowledge and judgment, there appeared hardly any trace of the author's acquaintance with the sciences in any of his writings; nay, even his pretended profundity in morals, and the knowledge of mankind, seemed to the Reviewer nothing more than a quaint and affected exhibition of the trite observations and hackney'd reflections of others.

His greatest merit appeared to consist in the labour thrown away on the tawdry glare of description, and the glossy, but fading, polish of stile. Instead of producing great and noble images, he seldom reached farther than high-sounding words. Instead of new and really elegant turns of thought, his novelty and refinement generally ended in some florid allusion, quaint antithesis, or fantastical preciseness of expression. His verse seemed heavy, cold and spiritless; and his prose alternately pompous and puerile.

A farther acquaintance with Dr. Johnson's literary character, acquired even among and from his own friends,

friends, had by no means contributed to remove Mr. K's unfavourable opinion of this writer, when his long-expected edition of Shakespeare made its appearance.

Having been already so egregiously disappointed as to the philological abilities of Dr. J. the Reviewer's expectations were by no means so sanguine as before. His enthusiastic veneration for Shakespeare, however, could not be restrained within the bounds of silence, on finding this editor had taken every opportunity to depreciate the merit of that incomparable bard; on whom Dr. J. hath, in repeated instances, (as is shewn in Mr. K's Review) endeavoured to fix the charge of *incapacity, folly, vulgarity, immorality and impiety*.

To aggravate all this, Dr. J. falls with equal violence on the only commentator on Shakespeare, that, by his own confession, hath acquitted himself with reputation; charging him with *weakness, ignorance, meanness, faithlessness, petulance and ostentation*.

Those who complain of Mr. K's severity, and charge him with scurrility, ill-manners and abuse, would do well to look through his work, and see if they can find any passage wherein he hath called Dr. J. *mean, faithless, immoral or impious*.

'But Shakespeare and Theobald are *dead*, and Dr. Johnson is *alive*; the former cannot suffer by any thing that is said of them, whereas the latter may be essentially hurt by an attack on his reputation.' This may be urged, indeed, by those who conceive Mr. K's excessive zeal for the honour of the dead is less excusable than Dr. J's excess of tenderness for the reputation of the living. It is very certain that, as they

arise from different motives, they must necessarily interfere with, or counteract each other. It is difficult, indeed, to say which favours most of envy and malignity *. We may envy the reputation both of the living and the dead ; but can hate only the living. Even hate, however, may arise from laudable principles, as honest men detest knaves, and lovers of truth abhor falsehood : but envy, whether directed to the living or dead, is a mean and odious passion. At the same time, it must be universally allowed more brave and honourable, though it may be less prudential, to attack the reputation of the living than the dead. Now fortitude hath ever been esteemed the general concomitant of ingenuoufness and candour, which never harbour in envious minds.

So far Mr. K. hath evidently the advantage over Dr. J. Besides, the friends of the latter, while they charge the former with envy at Dr. J's abilities and reputation, accuse him at the same time with insufferable self-sufficiency and vanity. But if the contempt with which he hath treated Dr. J. proceed really from his vanity and self-sufficiency, there is the less room to think him subject to the motives of envy ; for we never can envy those we truly despise. The truth, I imagine, is, that Mr. K. neither does the one nor the other by Dr. J. notwithstanding he hath sufficiently shewn a fixed detestation of that editor's literary misconduct. This detestation, as I observed before, may nevertheless be very just and laudable ; in which case

It is very justly observed, however, by a late ingenious French writer ; *S'il est horrible d'insulter aux vivans combien plus odieux est il de flétrir la reputation des morts !*

its effects cannot, with any propriety, be imputed to malignity.

I should now proceed to enquire how far Dr. Johnson may be defended from the suspicion of envy, as the motive for his abuse of Theobald and Shakespeare.

As it behoves others, however, to exculpate the Doctor, I shall only propose a few questions to those of his friends, who may chuse to answer them; such answers, in my opinion, tending effectually either to clear or convict him of acting from invidious motives.

S E C T. III.

Questions offered to Dr. Johnson's friends, respecting some curious anecdotes of the life and literary conduct of that gentleman.

IT hath been said, with regard to Dr. W-r-b-r-t-n, that he abundantly deserved the scurrility and abuse, which it is pretended Mr. K. hath thrown upon him; 'because he was the first author who introduced 'such foul language into controversy, which he never 'failed to bestow on all his opponents when he dared. 'But with Dr. Johnson the case is otherwise; he never 'gave any public offence, nor even engaged in any 'controversy.

Those who affirm all this, appear to know but very little of Dr. Johnson; nay, even to forget the fact for which he is arraigned. Did he give no public offence in the circumstances attending his edition of Shake-

peare? Did he not engage in a controversy with almost all his commentators; bestowing the worst of foul language on his opponents when he dared; that is, on those who were *dead*?

The following queries, however, take in a farther retrospect of Dr. J's literary conduct; the general tenour of which will be found to be tinged with an invidious disposition, that he was fond of indulging in actions, which his timidity was too great to permit him openly to avow.

1. Who encouraged LAUDER in his infamous attempt to charge the author of *Paradise Lost* with plagiarism from Massenius and others; clapping him on the back while he hopped about the town, exclaiming against that *axacrable villain* John Milton?
2. Who was the manager or editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* at that time, and kept out the papers written against *Lauder* for several months together; for which he afterwards apologized, when the imposition became flagrant, and the accuser himself, with imparal'l'd effrontery, confessed the forgery?
3. Who recommended such a modest gentleman to the lords Chesterfield and Granville, who honoured him with their protection, and rewarded him with an annuity, till even Dr. J's interest could not prevent his being ignominiously turned out of doors?

4. Who

4. Who actually wrote *Lauder's* pamphlet against *Milton*?
5. What ingenuous motive could possibly induce Dr. J. to join in such an invidious attempt, to depreciate the merit of one of the greatest poets England had to boast?
6. Was it not because Milton was, in his private character, a man of republican principles, and an enemy to ecclesiastical tyranny and arbitrary power?
7. What motive could induce Dr. J. to endeavour, in his *Rambler*, to lessen the poetical reputation of the late Mr. Pope, by laboured criticisms on a few of the most admired passages in his writings, and on those *only*?
8. Who wrote the severe and carping criticisms on the epitaphs of the same author; first published in the *Visitor*, and afterwards retailed in the *Magazines*?
9. Who advised and assisted the celebrated and ingenious Mrs. Lenox to an attack on the greatest poet the world ever produced, and that in the most essential part of his poetical character, in her *Shakespeare illustrated*?
10. Who wrote Dr. J's New Dictionary of the English language?
11. Whether Dr. J. ever read the Dictionary he is supposed to have written?
12. Whether the capital improvement, intended by that Dictionary, was not the collection of the authorities

authorities for, and the illustrations of, the use of English words?

13. Whether these authorities and illustrations do not in many hundred places contradict the meaning of the words, as given by the lexicographer?

14. Whether the writer hath not almost always mistaken the very meaning of words when he has departed from former dictionaries?

15. Whether he hath not, in a considerable number of instances, given the words without any meaning at all?

16. Who wrote the proposals for publishing the last edition of Shakespeare, and who executed the work, and how?

17. Whether indolence be an excuse for not doing what a man hath publickly undertaken, and is well paid for?

18. Whether it be not an insult to the common sense and common honesty of mankind, to pretend that the private *virtue*, even of the most ingenious and learned individual upon earth, should exempt him from correction, when he affects to be himself exempted from the faithful discharge of the common duties of his profession or calling?

19. Whether imbecility and indolence be really good-nature and benevolence; and whether, in an age of less ceremony and greater sincerity, the magisterial supineness, affected by Dr. J. would not be frankly called *pride* and *idleness*?

20. Whether, if the above questions cannot be answered, to the honour of Dr. J. what right either he or his friends have to complain of the severity of the chastisement bestowed on him *?

* To this score of queries I shall beg leave to add a dozen more, merely literary, and some of them not altogether confined to Dr. Johnson's conduct, but extending to that of his friends, who have been pleased to abuse Mr. K. on this occasion.

1. Whether the Drs. J. and H. have not been long in a secret and partial combination to applaud the writings, and enhance the literary reputation of each other?
2. Whether the Gentleman's Magazine hath not, for many years past, been notoriously prostituted to this purpose?
3. Whether the Rambler and the Adventurer, in their journey to the temple of Fame, were not obliged, like travellers that had but one horse between them, to ride and tie, from month to month occasionally?
4. Whether Dr. H. did not, many years ago, oblige the Reviewer with a letter, containing a long and elaborate criticism on one of his puerile performances; professing an high opinion of Mr. K's natural genius, and offering his best services in directing its cultivation?
5. Whether Mr. K. ever saw Dr. H. or gave him any cause of offence since that time; or whether he hath not ever spoken of him and his writings with due respect; while, on the other hand, Dr. H. hath taken more than one opportunity of endeavouring to obscure the little merit to which Mr. K. may have occasionally pretended?
6. Whether Dr. H. could have any other motive than Mr. K's differing from him in political and religious principles; and how far such a motive is admissible in the republick of letters?
7. How many lines Dr. J. wrote in the *Traveller*, for the awkward compliment paid him by its author in the Universal Museum; when he stiled him the *glory of the English nation*?
8. How many more he is to write in Mr. G's next poem, for his scribbling *nonsense* on the cover of Mr. K's Review at the coffee-houses; for his verses in the St. James's Chronicle of December 14, and for the favour he does the Reviewer in running about the town to abuse him?

9. Whe-

S E C T. IV.

Whether Dr. J. deserves better treatment than he has received; and how far Mr. K. is excusable in having so treated him.

DR. Johnson's friends will doubtless object, that it is much easier to ask questions than to answer them, and that injurious inuendoes may be safely conveyed in the way of query, even though they should be groundless.

I should not have presumed to ask those questions, however, had not Mr. K. furnished me with authenticated materials for making a satisfactory reply to every single article, if the Doctor, or his friends, should at any time require it. It was thought proper, in the mean time, to state the merits of Dr. J's literary character rather in a problematical than a

9. Whether Mr. G. who rails at all Reviewers, was not himself a Literary Reviewer, till he was discarded for incapacity?
10. Whether Dr. J. himself did not make several efforts to assume a kind of dictatorship over a certain periodical Review, interfering on subjects, of which he was consummately ignorant?
11. Whether Mr. G. is not one of Dr. J's light-troops? and whether he does not harbour some resentment against Mr. K. for exposing his ignorance, when he [Mr. G.] took upon him to give an account of *The present State of polite Letters in Europe*, without even knowing the names of the celebrated writers now living on the continent?
12. How Mr. K. can fail to hold such invidious pretenders to exclusive knowledge in some degree of contempt, and, like a man of spirit, *openly* to treat them accordingly?

peremp-

peremptory manner, that his partizans might solve any difficulties that might arise, in the best manner they are able. But if they cannot obviate such difficulties, and that very soon, it is not to be doubted that the good sense and impartiality of the publick will prevail over its former prepossessions, and determine for me that Dr. J. hath met with no worse treatment than he deserves.

How far Mr. K. is defensible in having inflicted it, is another matter of consideration. If the Reviewer, in the height of his zeal for the honour of Shakespeare, hath given too great a loose to his passions, and hath expressed himself unbecoming a scholar and a gentleman, he hath in so doing injured his own reputation more than he hath done that of Dr. Johnson. Nor is it any justification of Mr. K's scurrility to say it is a degree less scurrilous than that of the Doctors J——n or W———n.

If their fault, however, be no justification of his, it is some excuse for the latter that it appears to be the natural effect of a resentment excited by nobler and less interested motives.

To attack a man, in the warmth of resentment, however rudely, who is alive and able to defend himself, is certainly less exceptionable, in point of honour and spirit at least, than a premeditated design, conceived and executed in cold blood, to strip the dead of those honours which successive ages had bestowed on their memory.

It is to be observed also, that it is not very easy for men of warm passions, when affected with their subject, to express their resentment in terms always consistent with the common forms of politeness. Experience sufficiently evinces this, as we may be convinced by turning to almost any polemic writings, even on those subjects which in a peculiar manner require the appearance at least of the highest degree of temper and benevolence.

There is one circumstance, indeed, in which the Reviewer seems justly to have incurred the censure of impoliteness and want of urbanity. This is the reflection he hath made on a certain *natural* infirmity of Dr. J. In answer to this charge, however, it is to be observed, that Mr. K. being personally a stranger to the Doctor, and having formed the ideas of his character purely on the representations of the Doctor's friends, he really mistook that infirmity for an affected habit; as those very friends, in repeating Dr. J's *bons mots*, constantly made use of the same habit or infirmity to heighten the joke; and therefore may be as justly said to have ridiculed it themselves, as it is pretended Mr. K. has done. Nay, the Doctor's acquaintance are still more inexcusable, as they must be supposed to have known the real state of the case, and ought not to have given occasion for such a mistake, in a writer who is master of sufficient acrimony of stile, without descending to ridicule personal defects, which he never could conceive to be ridiculous.

Having

Having now done with Dr. Johnson's demerits, as well as the merits of Mr. K's Review, with regard to its severity in general, I shall proceed to take some notice of the principal objections that have been made to it by particular writers, especially by the authors of the Critical Review, the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine, the Candid Reviewers, and some few other volunteer critics.

To begin with the first-mentioned, whose inconsistent behaviour with regard to Mr. K's writings, even from the very commencement of their Review, may serve to elucidate their pretensions to impartiality, as well as their capacity to sit in judgment on works of genius or learning.

S E C T. V.

Specimens of the literary abilities and candour of the Critical Reviewers, occasionally exercised on the writings of Mr. K. and particularly on his Review of Dr. J's Shakespeare.

THE very ingenious and ingenuous authors of the Critical Review, having had frequent occasion to exercise their critical talents on the writings of Mr. K. it may not be amiss to take a retrospect of their former opinion of this writer's genius and abilities; as it may serve, in some measure, to account for that which they affect to entertain at present.

When an imperfect edition of *Epistles to Lorenzo* first made its appearance in England, these criticks, who had not long before entered on their judicial office, approved of them as spirited, just, poetical, descriptive, sensible and true *.

In their Review of the second edition, they again confessed 'they could not help admiring the perspicuity, the spirit, the variety of the author's expression and imagery †;' concluding their strictures with saying, 'We will candidly own our admiration of his genius, both as a poet and metaphysician §.'

In speaking of the same writer's translations, they express themselves with equal warmth of approbation.—Of that of *Rousseau's Eloisa*, they say, 'It is but justice to add, that we never perused a more spirited, just and elegant translation than that of *Eloisa*, though one of the most difficult performances in the French language, as it abounds with turns, sentiments and idiomatical expressions, which will hardly bear being translated into a foreign tongue ‡.'

Of *Gesner's Rural Poems*, they affirm, 'that in the harmony of the periods, the conciseness, the elegance and simplicity of stile, the original German is happily imitated by the English version.'

Will it be believed, when I affirm it, that these judicious criticks have, at other times, compared this

* CRITICAL REVIEW, vol. iii. page 164.

† Ibid, vol. vi. page 444.

§ Ibid, vol. vi. page 453.

‡ Ibid, vol. xii. page 211.

their admirable genius to Sternhold and Hopkins? or that, in their present strictures, they have charged so sensible, so poetical, so metaphysical a writer, with having published poultry observations, and ridiculous absurdities, in his Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakespeare? Nay, so treacherously has their spleen dealt with their memory, that they have even ventured to pronounce that 'the Trevoux Dictionary appears to be the ne plus ultra of the French learning' of the author of the *spirited, just and elegant* translation of Eloisa!

The reader will very naturally ask, what can possibly be the meaning of such strange inconsistency?—I will endeavour to inform him. When the Critical Reviewers were so lavish of their encomiums on Mr. K's writings, they were either ignorant of his private connections, or that he was the author of such writings; and thus may be supposed to have spoken of them to the best of their judgment, without partiality or prejudice: Mr. K. however, had no sooner shewn himself above being elated with the applause of ignorance, and had corrected them for the fallacy of their hypercriticisms*, than they became immediately his enemies; and that in a more virulent manner, when he was known to give the preference to a rival Review. Such, it is presumed, are the secret springs by which these tremendous judges of literary merit must, in this case, appear to be actuated.

* In the *Scrutiny*, or the *Critics Criticised*; for an account of which, see the Critical and Monthly Reviews for the year 1759.

In support of this presumption, we shall here recapitulate a few of those criticisms, on which they have ventured to rest the merits of their censure.

“ This Drawcanfir of a Reviewer opens his work with a specimen of his critical abilities, by correcting the following passage in the *Tempest*, vol. i. p. 8.

PROS. to MIR. ‘ I have with such provision in mine art
So safely order’d that there is no SOUL:
No, not so much perdition as an hair
Betid to any creature in the vessel, &c.’

“ Though we admit that Warburton’s, Theobald’s, and Johnson’s remarks on this passage are all absurd; yet, we think, our Reviewer has been ingenious enough to excel them even in absurdity; for he reads, instead of ‘ there is no SOUL,’ ‘ there is no ILL.’ We will venture to say, that there is no man of plain sense in the kingdom, who could suspect a depraved reading in this passage, as it stood originally. Shakespeare says neither more or less, than that

———— ‘ there is no soul — viz. *perdition* —————

Nay, not so much perdition as an hair,
Betid to any creature, &c.

Well may Mr. Kenrick adopt the clench of ILL-BETIDE such commentators.”

Was ever poor devil so caught in the cob-web of his own devices, as this unhappy *Critical* Reviewer? In the name of common sense what can he mean? For my part, I cannot even guess, so shall leave this sagacious criticism for the reader to explain as he can: observing only, in justice to Mr. K. that he proposes his alteration only, in case of the supposed necessity of making

making any alteration at all; which he does by no means affirm. Again,

“ARIEL. ‘Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and plaid
Some tricks of desperation:’

“Mr. Kenrick is for substituting a *fever of the mind*. Mr. Johnson is undoubtedly right in restoring the old reading. Admitting it not to be quite idiomatical, yet it is possessed of strength sufficient to maintain its place against mere conjecture. *Ex uno disce omnes*. The rest of his review of this play is of a piece with the specimens here exhibited.”

Here the Critical Reviewer’s ipse dixit gives the preference to Dr. Johnson’s reading; but the misfortune is, that what these Criticks impute to Mr. K. is the reading of all the modern editions, and not Mr. Kenrick’s*; so that the reader hath here a most notable instance of their judgment and impartiality in exhibiting the above two criticisms as just specimens of Mr. K’s Review.

They proceed, nevertheless, in the same magisterial and dogmatical stile to expose their own ignorance still farther in the following passages. His, say they, that is, Mr. K’s, “deriving the word *feodary* from the word *foedus*, a covenant, is an instance of ignorance hardly to be paralleled. The best English writers say *feodum*, instead of *feudum*. A feodary therefore is one who owes suit and ser-

* The editor of the Gentleman’s Magazine, quoting this passage from Mr. K’s Review, says, he would have it to be “The fever of the mad.” An egregious proof this of the attention and capacity of these writers to correct Mr. K. who in fact only opposes Dr. Johnson’s reading in this passage; advancing nothing of his own, except by way of mere hypothesis.

vice to his superior. Warburton's inaccuracy in spelling the word *feuda*, which is the Scottish term, instead of *feoda*, has brought our Critick into a blunder. A feodary is no other than a *servant*, an *agent*; and the very instance brought by this Reviewer from *Cymbeline* confirms it."

The word, whose derivation is here disputed, is, in some editions of Shakespeare, spelt *fedary*, without the diphthong. Supposing Mr. K. to be mistaken, however, which I do not believe to be the case, this instance of ignorance, as the critic calls it, is yet to be parallel'd, as he may see, by turning to Bailey's Dictionary, corrected and enlarged by Scot; where he will find the sense of the word, and even of the passage quoted from *Cymbeline*, laid down in the same manner.

Feuda may, for ought I know, be a Scottish term, and it may in Scotland mean a slave or servant; but neither Shakespeare nor Mr. K. wrote Scotch, but English; of which it is hardly possible for a Scotchman ever to be a *complete* master.

The next offence these criticks take at Mr. K's illustration is his philosophical explanation of the word *warps* in the famous song of *Blow thou winter's wind*. On which occasion they express themselves as follows:

"What a pity it is that this writer's whole display of critical and natural knowledge should be entirely thrown away; since nothing is more certain, than that Shakespeare meant no more by *warping*, but *fixing* or *freezing* the waters. The allusion is drawn from the operation of weavers, who *warp*, that is, *fix* their worsted or yarn in their looms before they work it."

But,

But, how is it certain that Shakespeare meant *no more but fixing or freezing*; when there is no proof that he meant even that: for, unless these criticks can produce the testimony of one English writer, or even one English *weaver*, to prove that the term *warp*, as related to the *woof*, is used as a verb, nobody can give into their notion of the allusion.

The following observation affords a remarkable instance of the modesty and learning of these critical gentry:

— “After all Mr. Kenrick’s exultations at the discovery of the meaning of the word *l’envoy*, in *Love’s Labour lost*, his etymology is but fantastical; nor is it justified by the *Trevoux Dictionary*, which seems to be the *ne plus ultra* of his French learning.”

Indeed! — In the first place, Mr. Critick, you tell a notorious untruth in asserting a thing you know nothing of: you have looked, I suppose, into the *Dictionnaire de Trevoux*, and because you cannot find such etymology justified by that work, you flatly affirm it to be fantastical, and very logically conclude that, because one Reviewer’s French learning extends no farther than the *Trevoux Dictionary*, another’s must be confined to the same limits. It appears, however, that Mr. K. has at least one dictionary more of French learning, as you call it, than you; for I find in one, that he put not long since into my hands, that his etymology of the word *envoy* is there justified in the following words:

ENVOI. — C’est comme l’abregé du chant
 Roial, ou de la balade. Ce n’est ordinairement
 E que

que la moitié d'un couplet du chant Roial, ou de la balade, qu'on fait à la fin des couplets de ces sortes de poemes, & qui a été nommé *envoi*, parce qu'on l'adreffoit au prince des jeux floratus, pour se le rendre favorable dans la distribution des prix. [L'envoi doit être delicat et ingenieux.]

DICTIONNAIRE FRANCOIS, par P. Richelot,
à Geneve ; chez Widerhold, 1680.

I shall mention but one more of their criticisms ; as it contains either a proof of their saying only what other writers have said before them, or of their readiness occasionally to adopt the sagacity of others in silence.

“ We shall give him credit for his retaining the word *knot* in the same play ; but we see no authority he has for supposing the king to be a wounded knot, or bird, so called. When we reflect, that he steps aside and conceals himself in a bush, while he discovers the lovers, so as to be as invisible as a *gnat*, the badness of the rhimes is removed by reading *gnat* instead of *knot* ; but this is mere conjecture.

It is really very good of these gentlemen to give such a *poultry observer* as Mr. K. credit for any thing ; especially as they had nothing better to offer than mere conjecture. But the worst on it is, that this conjecture was long ago conjectured by Mr. Pope, who adopted the same reading for the sake of the rhyme. This, however, it is possible these criticks on the critick of the editors of Shakespeare knew nothing at all about.

I come now to the more serious part of the offence, which these criticks have both taken and given, with regard to Mr. K's performance. This is the passage immediately succeeding the above ; in which, admitting

that Dr. J's note is a *vile* one, they proceed to insinuate that Mr. K. in his reprehension of it, hath forfeited his pretensions to *honour*, *spirit* and *virtue*. Nay, reader, don't laugh; it is really the *Critical* Reviewers, who, in this very article, "have entered their caveat against *illiberal* criticism," and talk about *honour* and *virtue*; even those, whose criticism hath heretofore been deemed l——s, and as such punished accordingly. You will say, perhaps, that they are reformed; that they have since authorized their printer to pay fifty pounds, out of his own pocket, to any person who can bring legal proof of their having taken money for the insertion of partial characters of books and authors, although they own it has been offered them *. What an instance this last of their integrity, impartiality and *virtue*!—Very true, indeed, and I firmly believe that they never did take any pecuniary bribe on this account; for, though I am acquainted with many mercenary booksellers, and as many vain authors, yet I don't know one, whom I think fool enough to value the best character they could give of his performance at three farthings. I will not contradict them positively indeed, and say that not one such is to be found; but

* See their late advertisement inserted in the news-papers, as also on the cover of the *Critical Review*, wisely to inform the country reader of the high esteem in which the Reviewers were held in town. It is well for them, indeed, that their rage of justification did not induce them to promise a reward for proving the editor guilty of receiving and inserting anonymous articles, which might, for ought he knew, be written by the authors of the books themselves: because, in this case, there might have been brought such damning proof, as might have made them tremble for the offered premium.

it happens extremely unlucky that these criticks, in thinking to do themselves honour, should confess a thing that cannot fail to entail on them disgrace. They own that money hath been offered them, though they had so much *virtue* as to refuse to take it. Does not this circumstance alone sufficiently evince what opinion the persons, offering the bribe, must have of those to whom it was offered? — Oh! fie! fie! for shame! never make this confession again, whether true or false, as you value your very existence. *Virtus post mortem* may serve well enough for a motto to the achievement of a dead cheesemonger; but the virtue even of a Critical Reviewer is not worth a groat to an author, who is damned while he is alive.

For decency's sake be a little consistent; and, for the future, beware of extolling the works of strangers to the skies, and of endeavouring afterwards to drag them down again, when you find such writers know too much to be vain of your praises, and are too sincere to become your friends. In vain may your hoddmandod * of a printer display his brawny muscles, and threaten to avenge your cause by his skill in the athletic sciences. You have yourselves given Mr. K. the appellation of a Tartar; and can you imagine he is to be intimidated by the frowns of a Saracen's head? Let not

* So called from a certain copy of verses, handed about lately in manuscript, and intended to be printed — and thereby hangs a tale. The verses, it seems, were tolerable good verses; but the printer of the Critical Review, having a most exquisite taste for poetry, did not like them. The reader will judge for himself; they ran thus.

your discreet hearts think it. Are there not ways and means to curb the insolence of ruffians, and guard

LUSUS NATURÆ, TYPOGRAPHUS.

I have thought that Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. SHAKESPEARE.

In NATURE's work-shop, on a day,
Her journeymen, inclin'd to play,
Half-drunk, 'twixt cup and can,
Took up a clod, which she with care
Was modelling a huge sea-bear,
And swore they'd make't a man.

They try'd, but handling ill their tools
Form'd, like a pack of bungling fools,
A thing so gross and odd;
That, when it roll'd about the dish,
They knew not if 'twas flesh or fish,
A man or hodmandod!

Yet, to compleat the piece of fun,
They christen'd it Arch H——n. —

"But what can this thing do? —"
"Kick it down stairs; the devil's in't"
"If it won't serve to write and print
"The C——L REVIEW."

But to the story. These verses, as I said before, would have appeared in the news-papers, had not the editors been either afraid of the Caliban's resentment, or fearful of setting a bad example to authors; whom they would readily assist to maul any private gentleman, yea, a prince of the blood-royal, if he were dead and nailed in his coffin, but not to barbacoee a live printer. By refusing to insert them, however, they robbed the publick of an egregious entertainment; for it can hardly be doubted that the lovers of turtle, whom Mr. H. lately treated at a guinea a head, would be equally fond of the calipash of a roasted hodmandod.

To proceed, however, in my tale; the poorness of the versification was not the only fault that was found with the above stanzas. Mr. H—— insisted on it they were actionable at law, and therefore proceeded gravely to lay the following queries before council.

Query 1. Whether it be not actionable at law for a poet to call a printer a hodmandod?

2. If

against the malice of assassins? Have we not Hyren here! Farewel — be advised and prosper.

S E C T. VI.

Of the ingenuouſneſs, impartiality, and urbanity of Sylvanus Urban, Gent. regarding the writings of Mr. K. and particularly his Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakespear.

EVERY body knows who was the original Sylvanus Urban, honest Cave, who, little as he knew of literature or science himself, had yet so much knowledge and discretion as to set a just value on his friends and correspondents, and behave to them at least with gratitude and common decency. When the necessity, indeed, of employing persons of superior genius and learning obliged him to lean on some right-hand-man, he could not always be accountable for what he was urged to do by others. In time Sylvanus Urban be-

2. If so, what method is most advisable for the plaintiff to proceed in order to recover damages; and what damages a Middlesex jury might be reasonably supposed to give?

The answer to the above queries, as I am informed, were to the following purpose. "An action on the case will undoubtedly lie. — Fact proved; damages high, proviso plaintiff proves hodmandod a fish of prey, as the sword-fish, the shark, or the like. Lord chancellor Bacon mentions it together with the tortoise: if the jury take it to be an eatable fish, damages not so high, unless not to be conveyed by land-carriage. Advises consulting with the naturalists; above all, to admit the truth of the libel; the truth, in law, aggravating the offence.

came

came a mere shadow; and the good-will of his friends was liable to be perverted by the caprice, ignorance, or ill-will of his journeymen-editors. How far the present Sylvanus is his own friend, in admitting of such a perversion, time hath already evinced in some degree, and will daily exhibit more plainly. Before I proceed any farther, however, I shall insert Mr. Urban's account of Mr. K's Review.

“ This piece is written with a malignity for which it is very difficult to account, as the authour declares that he is a stranger to Dr. Johnson, and never received any offence from him. If his ill-will arises from envy of the literary honour Dr. Johnson has acquired, or the mark of distinction he has received from his sovereign, he is too much an object of pity to move any other passion in the breast either of Dr. Johnson, or his friends *. He has treated the bishop of Gloucester with the same acrimony that he has treated Dr. Johnson, yet he declares he has himself some literary reputation which he would not wantonly hazard, being the author of two translations from the French, besides several anonymous pieces, which, he says himself, are too numerous to be good †.

* If the writer of this paragraph suspects Mr. K. of the above-mentioned motives from any thing his own heart suggests to him, he is himself too much, and too mean a wretch to *deserve* pity. And that he could have any other grounds, on which to form such a suspicion, he is called upon to make appear.

† Is this true? — Is this a specimen of Mr. Urban's ingenuousness, impartiality and veracity? The truth is, that Mr. K. in the Preface to his Review, speaking of his not standing exactly in the same predicament with the author of the *Canons of Criticism*, who had never written any thing before that piece, thought it necessary to add the following note, which the reader will see Mr. Urban has not only mutilated and misrepresented, but hath given it the most invidious turn.

“ In confirmation of what is here asserted, it may possibly be thought necessary to name some of those publications, on which
“ the

"This work consists principally of several conjectures†, which he has substituted for the conjectures of the Bishop and Dr. Johnson, frequently with as much confidence as if they were truths received by revelation, and confirmed by miracle §; of these we shall give such a specimen as will

"the public have conferred the honour of a favourable reception.—

"It is presumed needless, however, to particularize performances

"that would certainly have been less faulty, had they been less nu-

"merous. The author contents himself, therefore, with men-

"tioning only his Epistles to Lorenzo*; and the Translation of

"Rousseau's Eloisa and Emilius."

† This is notoriously false; Mr. K. having proposed very few conjectures; his work consisting principally of rational illustrations of the poet, or proofs positive of the ignorance of his commentators.

§ Well, and what then? Why may not a writer speak confidently when he is convinced he is in the right? And I don't find that either Mr. Urban, or any other of Dr. Johnson's friends, will venture to go about to prove Mr. K. in the wrong. They may rail in general terms; but if they meddle with particulars, they will possibly only expose their own nakedness, and be laughed at with the Critical Reviewers.—But Mr. K. speaks, says this *magazine*, as if his criticisms were truths "received by revelation, and confirmed by miracle." If he received them by revelation, however, I presume there was no manner of occasion for his having them confirmed by miracle, to warrant his confidence. Their production was, nevertheless, so far miraculous, that they were written in fewer days than Dr. Johnson took years to compleat his work: a circumstance which some wiseacres, who never saw them, urged publicly, as a proof they could be good for nothing; because,

* Can any thing be more pitiful and mean than the omission of the name of this work, with a view to represent Mr. K. as a mere translator? It is also foolish as mean, for how long did this *ingenuous* critick think this expedient would serve him? Did he think, because when Mr. K. was an anonymous writer, he despised these little artifices too much to take notice of them, that when he had by name attacked their *chief*, he would not take an opportunity to crush his pitiful dependents? Or did they imagine that, if Mr. K. should think them beneath his resentment, he would find none to join him in so good a cause? Could they conceive there was nobody who, while he was roasting the colossus like an over-grown turkey-cock, for the entertainment of the publick, would take the trouble to spit a dozen or two of his emissaries, by way of larks, to garnish the dish withal? — This critick was mistaken every way. —

said

enable the reader to judge of the rest, beginning where the author begins, that our impartiality may not be brought into question."

Would not any indifferent persons, who should read the above passage, imagine at least that the writer of it never once heard of the Reviewer, or his writings, in his life? But are not Dr. H——h and Mr. H——y the editors and managers of the Gentleman's Magazine? And is it possible that neither of these gentlemen remember that Mr. K. hath been an occasional contributor to their work from a very school-boy? And is this a specimen of the manners with which they treat a correspondent, for whom they have more than once expressed the highest regard; and for whose *valuable contributions* (as they have called them) they have even offered pecuniary gratifications, which he never condescended to accept? I have now in my hands sufficient proofs of what is here intimated, and the Gentleman's Magazine affords various others of the *acknowledged* value of the papers Mr. K. hath sent it, respecting very different branches of science and literature.

Can the managers of that work be so mean and self-interested, as to treat Mr. K. in this scandalous manner, because he has of late years been induced to favour other periodical works of the like kind? They can have no other motive, unless it be their closer attachment to Dr. J. But, however they may have been

said they, "a man of moderate genius could not read the book in "the time that Mr. K. *stans pede in uno* had produced a confutation "of it." But while the justice of Mr. K's criticisms in general remain incontestible, I leave the publick to judge, whether the rapidity of their composition redounds most to his credit or his dishonour.

F

obliged

obliged to that gentleman, and whatever opinion they may have of his literary abilities; are candour, truth and justice, all to give way to their partiality for him? Are the talents and reputations of the Doctors Johnson and H——h so very bulky, that those both of the dead and the living must be mangled, mutilated and depressed, in order to allow them room enough to vapour in? Surely the recent loss of a *Lloyd* and a *Churchill* might have rendered them a *little* more at ease in so wide a world! But, no. They are determined to have the universe to themselves and their partizans; condemning every one to defamation or obscurity, who does not enlist under the banner of the colossus*.

* Among numerous instances that might be brought of Mr. Urban's misbehaviour in this kind to Mr. K. I shall only mention two or three; which, though beneath his own notice, may serve as a specimen of those *little arts*, by which some modern writers have wriggled themselves into fame, and endeavoured to obscure the dawning reputation of others. It is remarkable that the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine hath of late years carefully avoided mentioning the very name of Mr. K. though formerly pleased to print it in large capitals to a puerile and insignificant performance, inserted so long ago as the year 1748.—He hath been as cautious also of mentioning the *Epistles to Lorenzo*, a work of established credit, not only in the pitiful instance before-given, but even in his list of books at the time of its publication.—When he thought proper also lately to reprint the fable, entitled, *Reason and Imagination*, (written by the CELEBRATED Mr. Christopher Smart, as he himself styles that gentleman) and addressed to Mr. K. he judged it expedient even to mutilate that piece, in order to omit the address, as well as the following elegant compliment which is paid to Mr. K. at the conclusion.

O, Kenrick! happy in the view,
Of Reason and of Fancy too,
Who reconcil'st with Euclid's scheme
The tow'ring flight and golden dream,
With thoughts at once restrain'd and free:
I dedicate this tale to thee.

At

They are here given to know, however, that Mr. K. detests all combinations in literature, as much as he despises the monopolists of fame. Let those, who find themselves unable to stand alone, combine to support each other. Mr. K. will go hand in hand with any fair and open enquirer after literary or scientific improvement : but he is neither so young and weak as to need the help of leading-strings, nor so old and feeble as to require the assistance of crutches. But to proceed.

Mr. Urban pretends, even after thus throwing out the most infamous and groundless insinuations concerning the motives for Mr. K's Review, to select such a specimen of it, as may enable the reader to judge of the rest, without calling his impartiality in question. What these specimens are, may be seen at the bottom of the page * ; and how far they will justify his impar-

At another time this editor promised his readers an abstract of what he called a *very sensible* anonymous pamphlet, written by Mr. K. but, having learned the name of the author before the next month's magazine appeared, he somehow forgot his promise, and possibly has not recollected it to this day. And yet, during all this time, not the slightest occasion was neglected in which Mr. Urban could compliment Dr. Johnson or Dr. Hawksworth. But I fear my readers are sufficiently disgusted at the recapitulation of such minute and pitiful artifices, which are as disgraceful to the profession of letters in general, as to those who practise them in particular.

I should otherwise mention some more serious and important causes of complaint, proceeding obviously from the same source, which Mr. K. hath farther to exhibit against the editor and manager of this magazine. —

* *The pretended impartial specimens of Mr. K's Review, as exhibited in the Gentleman's Magazine.*

T E M P E S T, Vol. I. p. 8.

Prof. to Mir.] TEXT. I have with such provision in my art

So safely ordered that there is no soul :

No not so much perdition as an hair

Betid to any creature in the vessel.

ciality is left to the reader to determine, after having compared them with Mr. K's Review.

Rowe and Warburton.] no soul *lost*.

Theobald.] no *foil*.

Johnson.] no *foil*.

Kenrick.] no *ill*.

Dr. Johnson adopted *foil*, as co-inciding with what *Ariel* says afterwards :

Not a hair perished

On their sustaining garments not a blemish.

Kenrick rejects *foil*, because, as he says, it does not agree with *creature*, but relates to the cloaths only*.

V O L. I. p. 9.

Prof. to Mir.] TEXT. — and thy father

Was duke of Milan, and his only heir,

And princefs, no worse issued.

Theobald. A princefs, no worse issued.

Johnson. Perhaps it should be, and *thou* his only heir.

Kenrick. *Thou* destroys the measure; *Theobald* is right†.

V O L. I. p. 15.

Ariel.] TEXT. Restored by Johnson.

Not a soul

But felt a fever of the *Mad*, and plaid

Some tricks of desperation :

All modern editions, fever of the *mind*.

Kenrick. *The* fever of the *mad* †.

V O L. I. p. 19.

Mir.] The strangeness of your story puts

Heaviness in me.

Mr. Kenrick censures Dr. Johnson for attempting to account for a wonderful story's producing sleep, because this heaviness of *Miranda* was the effect of *Prospero*'s enchantment, not considering that *Miranda*'s supposition was to be accounted for, not the fact §.

* This is a false representation. Mr. K. does not require the text to be altered at all, and only proposes this reading in case it should be altered. He gives other and more substantial reasons also in support of his proposal.

† False again. The breach of the measure is not the only reason hinted by Mr. K. though that is a sufficient one for rejecting Dr. Johnson's *thou*.

‡ This too is false. Mr. K. approves the reading of all the later editions, viz. a fever of the *mind*, and only proposes the changing of Dr. J's *a* into *the*, merely on the supposed necessity of altering the text, and the possibility of Shakespeare's writing *fever of the mad*.

§ Another lying blunder this ! It is not *Miranda*'s childish notion that Mr. K. laughs at, but one of Dr. Johnson's articles of faith ; who, in accounting for the said notion, says, " I believe experience will prove that any violent agitation of the mind easily subsides in slumber."

V O L.

As to the insinuations themselves, they are indeed too invidious and contemptible to require any other answer than may be deduced from the foregoing pages of this defence. But if Mr. Urban, and his brother criticks, will admit no man to have modesty or *virtue* but Dr. J. in whom even *indolence* and *insolence* is partially conceived to be such, they may know that Mr. K.

V O L. I. p. 38.

Ant.] TEXT. Although this Lord of weak remembrance

— hath here almost persuaded,

For he's a spirit of persuasion, only

Professes to persuade, the king, his son's alive:

Johnson. For HE, a spirit of persuasion, only

Professes to persuade:

Kenrick retains the reading of the text, only removes the comma in the first line from *persuasion* to *only*; supposing the word *spirit* to mean form, apparition, semblance, not the body, or substance of persuasion.

V O L. I. p. 76.

Ariel. Text restored by Dr. Warburton, and acquiesced in by Dr. Johnson:

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;

In a cowslip's bell I lie:

There I couch when owls do cry,

On the bat's back I do fly

After summer merrily.

Theobald, Pope, and Hanmer, after sun-set.

Kenrick endeavours to shew, that the reasons given by Dr. Warburton for the restoration are inconclusive †.

It is judged needless here to make any particular remarks on the above specimens, as their falshood and partiality will be evident to every reader who compares the copy with the original.

† This indeed is true, and his endeavours are sufficiently successful. But can any thing be more flagrant than the above instances of falshood, prevarication, and misrepresentation? And yet it would be rude, indecent and unmannerly, I warrant ye, to charge Mr. Sylvanus Urban with telling *wilful lies* on this occasion. Yet are they any better? Modern politeness, you will say, requires me to suit my stile to the delicacy of the offender, rather than to the enormity of the crime. Well then, I tell you Dr. H——h “you are a fibber, so you are, you, naughty man you, and I won't love you, nor will I give you any more marmalade or panada, so I won't.”——Will this please? or is it not sufficiently gentle and *candid*?

that at least *pride* enough to be above *envying* any man, and *industry* enough to stand in no need of that *charity* which *idleness* must accept of or starve †

All the world knows the *Adventurer* languished for a pension, and long pined away at the disappointment : nor will even his reputation supply its place, not-

† Not that the word *charity* is the most proper term to give to pensions bestowed on those who have repeatedly represented them as the wages of iniquity. But as I am willing to treat Dr. J. with all possible tenderness, I would not give it so severe a name, as is done by his pretended friends, who represent it as a sort of hush-money ; a kind of retaining fee, to prevent him engaging his pen in opposite interests. But, if this be the case, what is it better than a species of bribery and corruption ? And how does this differ from the wages of iniquity, except that such wages are received without being earned ? A mighty indelicate situation, after all, for a man of such consummate VIRTUE ! — But I cannot close this note, without taking some notice of what is advanced on this subject, by the several *virtuous* critics who have censured Mr. K's performance.

They say Mr. K's great quarrel with Dr. J. appears to be the latter's accepting a pension ; and yet they intimate the former would be glad of an opportunity of accepting one himself. But, pray, if these gentry know nothing of Mr. K. as they pretend, how can they take upon them to say he would be so glad of a pension ? And if they do know any thing of him, they must know at the same time, that, notwithstanding Dr. J's *bon mot**, his industry enables him to live much better, without a pension, than Dr. J. can do with. Besides, the case is not parallel ; for though a pension might be acceptable to Mr. K. (and to whom, pray, would it not ?) he never railed at pensions, nor abused placemen and pensioners in his life ; and, if it were offered him, could receive it as a reward for services done, or at least intended to be done, to his country. But how a man of Dr. J's known political principles could receive it without a blush, and at the same time pretend to *modesty* and *virtue*, is what I cannot conceive.

* To be added to the *Johnsoniana*, unless Mr. K. should yield to the pressing solicitations of Dr. J's friends, and be thence prevailed on to suppress those *choice sayings* in the next edition of his Review, as in all probability he will ; the authenticity of some of them being *ingenuously* questioned by the very people, from whose lips Mr. K. actually took them down.

withstanding

withstanding he may set an additional value on it *. But it is not for persons of such confined talents, and pusillanimous dispositions, to judge of the motives and actions of writers of more extensive knowledge and more manly abilities.

If any of Dr. J's partizans think they can defend him, in the late outrage he hath committed against the memory and reputation of Shakespeare, let them stand forth boldly, and they shall be received like men. But this, it seems, is not enough for the refined and elegant writers of the present age: they must be treated with *tenderness*, with *gentility*, with sweatmeat and sugar-candy I warrant ye, like fine ladies and pecking children.—Out upon such a pack of finicking fribbles; with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins heads, and those even minnikins; mere dealers in frippery in the rag-fair of Literature! It is certainly a wonderful instance of a man's self-sufficiency to think himself able to encounter such diminutive opponents as these! Here, as Falstaff says, is no vanity. Dean Swift used to say of himself, that he was too *proud* to be *vain*. I will venture, in this particular case, to say the same of the Reviewer of Dr. Johnson's Shakespeare: and so, Master Sylvanus, good night to your Urbanity; and, to supper with what appetite you may.

* "And why should he not?" you will say. "Is not Dr. H. the editor of the immortal *Swift*, as Dr. J. is of *Shakespeare*?"—Yes, and hath doubtless done him equal honour in absurdly and falsely criticising on the stile of that spirited and admirable writer. Oh! if the ghost of *Swift* did but haunt Dr. H. as that of *Shakespeare* does Dr. J. How would that sarcastic spirit avenge himself on this piddling critick!

S E C T.

S E C T. VII.

Remarks on the strictures of the Candid Reviewers, and the other volunteer criticks that have taken upon them to abuse the Reviewer of Dr. J's Shakespeare.

IT is something remarkable that, among all the writers, who have drawn the pen on the present occasion, against Mr. K. not one of them hath ventured to take the part of Dr. J. The *critical* Reviewers, we have seen, give him up entirely; even Mr. Urban himself says nothing in his defence. The pretended acrimony of Mr. K's manner, indeed, is disapproved by all parties; but this I have already endeavoured to justify. I shall proceed, therefore, to enquire how far those, which are as yet unnoticed, are justifiable in *their* manner of treating Mr. K.—To begin with the *Candid* Reviewers. These *honest* gentlemen, who have borrowed the whole of Mr. K's preface, as they did the month before the greater part of Dr. J's, have given such an inconsistent and motley account of the *Reviewer's* performance, that it is very difficult to say whether they have most praised or censured it.

In its *favour* they sometimes admit, that “the matter of it does demand the highest approbation.” That “Dr. Johnson will find himself *unable* to reply to it.”—That “Mr. Kenrick has very sufficiently shewn that Dr. Johnson has played booty throughout his boasted edition.”—That “Mr. K. hath improved upon Dr. J.”—That “they agree with Mr. K. that
Shakespeare

Shakespeare still stands as much in need of a new edition as ever."—That "he hath happily succeeded in giving, by means of an easy interpretation, a consistent meaning to several passages, in regard to which other interpreters have run after far-fetched explanations."—That "they entirely agree with him in the simple sense he gives to words, and join with him in wondering how Warburton and others could ever puzzle themselves so much about them," &c. &c.

In its *disfavour*, they insinuate that "Mr. K. has committed blunders as well as other men, who bragged as much; witness poor Dr. Warburton."—That "Mr. K. has sometimes misapprehended his author's meaning, as well as Dr. Johnson."—That "future observers will improve on Mr. K, and that he is therefore not fit to publish an edition of Shakespeare."—That "Mr. K. instead of profiting by his own admonitions, sometimes commits the same faults he blames in others."—That they cannot help expressing "their admiration at the blessed effects which metaphysics and philosophy have upon criticism in poetry!" intimating thereby that Mr. K. is too much of a philosopher to know any thing of poetry.—That Mr. K. displays great inability in tracing out the beauty of poetic images, and that his remarks are ridiculous.

I shall not enter upon a confutation of the assertions of these critics; the instances in which they presume to differ from Mr. K. being, to the last degree, absurd and contemptible; as the reader may conclude from their affirming, in the course of their critical investigation, that Shakespeare had no knowledge of a

climax, which they are pleased to term a rhetorical gorgon-faced word. They have sagaciously discovered also that Shakespeare acted, with *very little* judgment, in the execution of one of his greatest master-pieces of art. But this is sufficient with regard to their literary strictures: I come now to their personal ones; and here they charge Mr. K. with having descended to make use of "scurrility, abusive and even low-lived * petulance," with "ribaldry," with "bragging," with "foul language," with "being habituated to abusive blustering," with "wanting a pension to stop his mouth," with "being a voracious boreas," with "being a literary bruiser," with "fighting tooth and nail

Does not this polite epithet serve to shew, that the writer himself must undoubtedly be a person in *high-life*? *Ex ungue leonem*. This critic, to speak in his own dialect, must certainly be a gentleman of *three outs*. Low-lived! Could ever one have thought of such a word's getting into print, and that by means of a professed critic too! *O tempora! O mores!* Proud, however, as this gentleman may be of the *Dignity and Advantages of living in a Garret**, I would not advise him to riot too luxuriously on rich sauces. Spartan broth is a stimulating aliment, especially when seasoned with garlick. Those who live *high* seldom live *long*. Nay, my mind forebodes that, even while I am now writing, this son of *Candour* is no more. The death-watch ticks—'tis even so—hark, I hear his knell—poor devil! His spirit is departed. 'Twere a dirty piece of work, or I would rip him up, and preserve his carcase, like that of Duke Humphry, in pickle. If any charitable hand will do it for him, it must be steeped well in the acrimony of Mr. K's Review. That may possibly keep it awhile above-ground. But alas! what pickle can long preserve a body, that, for want of proper stamina, never was wholly alive; and, by the time it was half dead, was quite rotten! Ashes to ashes; dirt unto dirt; such is the end of modern *candour*!

* See an ingenious pamphlet, published some years ago, with this title.

like dogs and bears," and finally with "being a whimsical, lynx-eyed, critico-poetico-metaphysico-magico philosopher."

The reader will judge for himself how far a set of critics, who are so admirably well skilled in calling names, are to be credited in charging any writer with *scurrility*, *petulance*, *ribaldry*, and *foul-language*; words, I can assure him, that are not to be found in Mr. K's Review! But it is not only against such critics, as pretend to have read his performance, that Mr. K. hath just cause of complaint. There are those who condemn both him and his Review, without seeing or knowing any thing of either, except what is told them by Dr. Johnson's partizans. Nay, several of these *candid* and *impartial* gentry began to rail openly in the public news-papers, at sight of Mr. K's advertisement only. The terms of this, truly, were highly indecent; it was a kind of high-treason, a species of impiety, even to imagine Dr. Johnson could be *ignorant* or *inattentive*. One would have thought him placed at the head of literature, as the Roman pontiff is at the head of his church, and with the same pretensions to infallibility. Every body, forsooth, was expected to kiss pope Johnson's toe, even at the hazard of having their fore-teeth kicked out by his holiness's brutality. But Mr. K. had never any inclination to be treated in so gross a manner, as that in which he had heard Dr. J. had taken the liberty to behave towards some persons of the first rank in the world of science and letters. It was reserved for him, indeed, to pay the doctor in his own coin, and avenge the repeated insults received

by injured modesty. To appeal to fact, however, in support of what is above asserted, Mr. K's Review was hardly published before a letter, signed J. May, appeared in the London Chronicle, evidently founded on the advertisement only, in which Mr. K. was charged in gross terms with making use of FOUL-MOUTHED *language*, of want of *decency*, *good-manners*, and I know not what.—What a *fine-mouthed*, smooth-tongued, polished generation is the present! This Mr. Sweet-lips was pleased to say, “Whatever judgment the public may entertain of the late edition of Shakespeare, the editor is too well known, to have the charge of ignorance so easily admitted against him.”—Doubtless he is; and it would in no shape have answered the Reviewer's end for the public to have been satisfied by his advertisement without reading his book.—By the readiness, however, with which Mr. May, and indeed all Dr. J's friends, seem to give up the editor of Shakespeare, there is great reason to presume Mr. K. did not promise more in the newspapers than he effected in his pamphlet. So that it appears Dr. J. is not so well *known* as this gentleman supposes. His name, indeed, is in every body's mouth, and it is possible there are few of those, whom, from their fondness for *fine writers*, we may with propriety enough call *fine readers*, who have not yawned with drowsy admiration over those quaint and insipid performances, *Irene* and the *Idler*. But these works support but a small part of Dr. Johnson's literary reputation: the foundation of which is laid so deep in the rubbish of erudition, that it is impossible

possible for such superficial readers to discover it. Like the spectator of the invisible cock, however, Mr. May seems to be very sure it is there.—This same Mr. J. May, also, takes farther upon him to ask “who is this W. K. who so rudely steps forth from”—nobody knows where, to attack a gentleman of “known literary abilities?”—This gentleman must have very few connections, and know little of what is doing, in the literary world, to have any occasion to ask such a question. For, whoever *he* be, or wherever *he* comes from, Mr. K. may certainly say with propriety to HIM, *Not to know me argues thyself unknown.* But perhaps this gentleman, like the editor of Lloyd’s Chronicle, and some other writers, who affected, on the like occasion, to speak of *one Mr. K.* as if an utter stranger to his existence, may only know him too well, having before smarted from the just severity of his critical pen. If so, Mr. May is answered; if not, and he was really desirous of knowing something of Mr. K. he may have, in some measure, gratified his curiosity in the perusal of the foregoing sheets.

The next gentleman I shall take notice of (which shall be the last, as there would be no end of pursuing anonymous writers) is one Mr. Hypercriticus, who, about the same time, without ever having seen Mr. K’s book, was incited to publish, among other sagacious reflections, the following wise sentences. “From the very short time since the publication of Mr. Johnson’s edition of Shakespeare, and from the very rapid

“pid * progress of Mr. Kenrick’s remarks thereon, I
 “*believe* they must be crude and imperfect.” Believe! quoth he, Is not this very candid and ingenuous? But he proceeds to give a reason for the faith that is in him. “For to pass a right judgment on books “(says Longinus) requires a great length of time, and “a perfect knowledge of the subject.” Well, and what then? The writings of Shakespeare might have been the object of Mr. K’s study for years, and he might thence have acquired (at least for what Hyper-criticus knew to the contrary) a perfect knowledge of the subject; and if so, no longer time would be requisite for him to point out Dr. Johnson’s mistakes, than was necessary to read his book. But, says this gentleman, “I *suppose* Mr. K. is a critick by intuition; one who, in regard to books, sees into the “merit of the whole, by reading only a part.” As we had before a *believe*, here we have a *suppose*. Are not these very pretty grounds to proceed on, to the condemnation of a writer unread. But how, if what I just now asserted be true, that Shakespeare’s writings have been many years the favourite object of Mr. K’s reading and study; how, if he hath long since accumulated materials for an edition of that poet, as

* Another of Dr. J’s friends is angry with Mr. K. for a like reason, remarking, as before observed, that Mr. K. *stans pede in uno* wrote his Review of Dr. Johnson’s book, before a person of a moderate capacity could read it.—But if Mr. K. is generally in the right, and Dr. J. in the wrong, I don’t see how this reflects any disgrace on the former. On the contrary, if Mr. K. *stans pede in uno* hath given such a broad-footed colossus as Dr. J. a fall, it shews him to be no bad wrestler. So stand clear, if you are upon the *offensive*.—

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is also true; I say, how, Mr. Hypercriticus, in this case, can you justify your precipitate censures, and what becomes of your *suppose*? And to suppose for once it was not so, surely Mr. K. might, as you say, judge of the *whole* by reading a *part*, with as much propriety as you judge of his performance by reading only his advertisement in the news-papers? Why might not he be, without a *suppose*, a critick intuitively as well as you? But “sarcasm, you say, is unmannerly.” I wish, that where you learned to be so *very mannerly*, you had only learned also to be equally *ingenuous*; you would have saved me the trouble, and yourself the mortification, of this reprehension. I say the same to all the rest of the mannerly, candid, decent, delicate partizans of Dr. Johnson, who have, on this occasion, been attempting to box in mufflers, or throwing dirt with their gloves on. As to the former, Mr. K. is too hardy to feel their puny efforts to offend him; and, as to the latter he cannot help smiling to see, how easily their pellets dry and rub out, while they themselves are begrimed up to the ears, in vainly endeavouring to bespatter him.

Having now done with particular altercation, I should here leave both Mr. K. and Dr. J. to stand or fall by the judgment of the publick, had there not been some strictures let fall in some of the papers levelled against Mr. K. charging him with as great a want of *modesty*, as he hath done Dr. J. with want of *knowledge*. I shall therefore beg leave to say a word or two on both these topicks, viz. on the *modesty of men of letters*, and on *literary knowledge*.

S E C T. VIII.

On the modesty of men of letters.

OF all kinds of *modesty*, whether real or affected, perhaps that of *Authors* is the most singular. *A modest Author!* It is a kind of contradiction in terms, and sounds to my ear exactly like the expression of a *modest strumpet*. There is no doubt that a man may be a modest man before he commence writer, as a gentleman may be an honest gentleman before he be made minister-of-state, or as even a butcher may have some bowels of compassion before he turn bum-bailiff; but no sooner are they initiated into the *routine* of their respective offices, than modesty, honesty, and humanity take flight and leave them.

This is severe, you will say.—It is so; but it is nevertheless founded in truth, and may be applied to many writers now living, and probably likely to live so long as they can get any thing by prostituting either their talents or reputation.

Certain it is, that a closer parallel can hardly be drawn between any two known characters, than between a common scribbler and a common strumpet. How bashfully doth the young enamorado of the muses look at you, when you speak to him about publishing his first production; even as an innocent country-wench blushes up to the eyes, when you first talk of untying her garter! But when they have been a while tumbled over in the sheets, the virgin-modesty of

of both is pretty equal. There is this difference between them, indeed, that the one grows bold by losing reputation, and the other by gaining it. This difference, however, does not in the least alter their conduct or appearance when they come upon the town: the reputation then aimed at by both, being very different from what they either lost or gained. The one seeks not to improve his talents any more than the other her charms; but both apply assiduously to display and make the most of what they possess; and if they covet fame, it is generally with a secondary view to the venal purposes of prostitution*. Is it possible that such characters can have any real modesty, however necessary they may find it to assume its appearance, artfully to impose on the world?

Not but that there are degrees, both in venality and impudence; so that as a *demi-rep* may be *comparatively* modest and disinterested, so may an *author*. But to drop the comparison; as there are many writers of a more liberal stamp than to come under any denomination that will rank them in this parallel; writers, who, while they labour to instruct and entertain the publick, labour equally to improve themselves, and to render their future writings more valuable from the en-

* Thus an author, whose abilities are exhausted, and a courtesan, whose charms are decayed, may still live upon the emoluments arising from their fame. Let them but get their names recorded in a *Race*†, or a *Meretriciad*, and they may still remain the favourites of purblind fops and superficial wittings.

† See a poem so called, in which Dr. J. is celebrated, among other things, for his *modesty*; and in like manner Paul V——t, who wears a little smart bob, is described as overwhelmed by a wig more tremendous than Dalmahoy's.

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courage-

couragement given to the present, I must own I cannot help thinking that such writers debase themselves greatly, whenever they affect the false modesty of unexperienced tyros, or designing ignorants. There is a species of assurance in men of real knowledge, which may be said, without impropriety, to be consistent with the modesty becoming their character, as they could not possibly divest themselves of it without evident hypocrisy and affectation. As to authors by profession, they must necessarily either display their assurance by insisting on their own merit, or, in fact, confess themselves bunglers, or impostors. And indeed why should they not? If an artist discover any mode of mechanical operation, or execute a piece of mechanism, which is an improvement on what others have done before him, or what nobody can execute but himself, who charges him with want of modesty in boldly asserting his own pre-eminence? Why then should a critick, a philosopher, an historian, or a poet, be thought too assuming in laying publick claim to that merit, which they actually possess? What should we think of an artizan or manufacturer, who should, in his advertisements and shop-bills, *modestly* affect a diffidence of being able to give his customers satisfaction, having himself a mean opinion of his own abilities? Should we not conclude, without hesitation, that he was either a knave or fool, or both? Yet how common is it to meet with authors, who have been many years *in trade*, ridiculously affecting to think meanly of productions, which they nevertheless importunately obtrude on the publick, and make us pay for at as high

a price as possible? Yet many of these writers have the character of being modest men. In my opinion, however, I think it an instance of very great *impudence*, to say no worse of it, for a man to offer me a commodity at a great price, and to tell me at the same time he thinks it good for little. For what is this, in fact, but to tell me that he thinks me as great a fool as he confesses himself to be a knave?

And yet, if a writer were to use the same arguments in the preface of his book, to set off his works to advantage, as an artizan or manufacturer is allowed to do his, in his shop or warehouse, he would of course be condemned for want of *modesty*. Thus we see a very modest man may incur the obloquy of being an impudent author; and a very impudent author acquire the reputation of being a modest man.

The true state of this matter seems to be this. Ignorance and impudence as generally go together as innocence and modesty; but ignorance being often the companion, and sometimes even the guardian, of innocence, it is no wonder that impudence should put on the appearance of modesty, in order to make us take mere ignorance for pure innocence.

Knowledge as naturally inspires fortitude, as truth abominates hypocrisy. How absurd is it then to require men of real abilities to affect that diffidence and ignorance to which they must necessarily be strangers! At the same time, what can we think of those writers, who, after being long hackneyed in the ways of men, and of their profession; who, after setting themselves up even at the head of that profession, pretend

to tremble while they write, to bow down with reverential awe to superior learning, to kiss the rod of correction, &c. &c. What, I say, can we think of such writers, but that, sensible of their own ignorance or imbecillity, they are cajoling the putlick in a manner that deserves the name of the highest *impudence*.

Much more modest and manly is it for a writer of years and experience, to assert boldly and confidently what he hath good reason to think he knows*; and openly to defy every groundless imputation or insinuation of ignorance,

S E C T. IX.

On literary knowledge; with some remarks on IGNORANCE *and* INATTENTION.

IT hath been frequently observed, that the knowledge of *words* is not the knowledge of *things*. Indeed the distinction between the *scholar* and the man of *science* is now become general. It is nevertheless certain, that a man cannot be a considerable proficient in philology, particularly with regard to the modern languages, without having made some acquisitions in science. It is not my intent, however, to expatiate here on this distinction, or to enhance the preference due to science above mere literature; my intention be-

* And if he has not such reason, he should not trouble the publick with his reveries.

ing only to throw out a few short observations on literary knowledge in general.

“ Be not vain of thy learning, child, said my grandfather to me when I was a boy ; I have lived to forget more than thou hast learned in thy whole life.”

All this was very true ; and yet I thought myself, nevertheless, as good a scholar as my grandfather : for when we were sometimes both at a loss for a word or two of Greek, I found the only difference between us was, that I turned to the Lexicon for those I never knew, and he for those he could not remember : but my *copia verborum* was nevertheless equal to his.

Now it would be a matter of some importance to determine, whether a man can with propriety be said to know what he cannot remember, even though he should have formerly had it perfectly impressed in his memory ?

I am afraid that we shall go nigh to be laughed at by the vulgar, should we admit that a man may be said to know what he hath forgot, and can't tell us if we ask him. And yet, if he should recollect it half-an-hour hence, without any body's telling him in the mean time, surely he must have had such knowledge in him at the time of his being asked ; since it does not appear that he had by any external means acquired it since.

This would afford a curious and subtle disquisition ; but, as I have not time to enter here into a profound investigation of all the difficulties that suggest themselves concerning it, I shall only make an application of it to the
learning

learning of the two last editors of Shakespeare, and leave the reader to make it out as well as he can.

Mr. K. hath proved, in several parts of his Review of Dr. J's edition, that the said editor either did not then know, or had forgot the meaning of several words and passages, which it is plain the Doctor must have formerly known, and probably would have recollected some odd time or other. I shall instance only one or two. In one the very learned Doctors J. and W. both appear not to know the meaning of the word *convene*; Dr. W. objecting to Shakespeare's proper use of it, and Dr. J. adopting the said objection: and yet Mr. K. hath justified Shakespeare, and convicted both the editors of the authority of Dr. J's own Dictionary.

Again, in regard to the use of the old phrase, *taken with the manner*, both these learned editors flatly contradict themselves; asserting in one volume that it is used one way, and in another volume that it is used differently.

I might mention many other instances of the like kind; but these will suffice for my present purpose. What I want to know is, whether these are instances of *ignorance* or not?

Dr. J's friends will say, "O, no—he certainly knew better." Knew better? when? What, when he was told of the blunder, I suppose? Surely that man may justly be called *ignorant*, whose knowledge, how great soever, is out of the way when it is wanted!

Will it be said, these are not instances of *ignorance* but *inattention*? Pray what is *inattention*? Do you mean

mean to say that the Doctor did not read these passages, or that he read them when he was asleep?

If he read them, and was wide awake, these mistakes could never have happened from *inattention*, but must have been derived from *forgetfulness*; which, according to the arguments above adduced, must be a species at least of *ignorance*.

But the criticks will possibly ask me, what I mean by being *wide awake*, and by Dr. J's *reading* these passages? They will say, perhaps, that they know as well as I, that, when a commentator reads a passage over, he must comprehend it some way or other, right or wrong; and that no *inattention*, in that case, can prevent the operation of his judgment respecting the words that lie before him; so that, if he then mistakes, it must be through *ignorance*. "But this was not the case; (it may be said) Dr. J. could never dream that Dr. W. could be mistaken so grossly in matters so clear and obvious, and therefore copied those passages implicitly from Dr. W's Comment: so that it was nothing more than *inattention*."

Call you this method of proceeding *inattention*? It is such *wilful negligence*, that your friend Dr. J. will hardly be obliged to you for thus defending him from the charge of *ignorance*; for surely, if we may not call it want of *knowledge*, we must call it want of—— something else, which a man of acknowledged *virtue* should not be without. What would a similar conduct to this, be called in any of the common concerns of life? Happy is it, undoubtedly, for the present race of authors, that they ALL, *being pensioned*,
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can subsist and provide for their families, without being obliged to publish their works by subscription ; for, after such flagrant instances of *inattention*, and that in a writer of the first reputation for learning and *virtue*, what encouragement can any other, of less note, or less reputed virtue, ever hope to meet with ?

The late Mr. Fielding, speaking somewhere of those gentlemen, who had tied themselves up, as it was then called, from subscribing to works of genius and literature, expresses his resentment against them, by saying, it is a pity they were not tied up in good earnest ; but what do those authors deserve, who first gave occasion for people entering into such illiberal engagements ?

And what doth Dr. J. in particular deserve, for having obtruded on the world the worst Commentary of Shakespeare that ever appeared ? and, at the same time, for having, by his procrastination and neglect, so effectually disgusted the publick with editors and subscriptions, that it is presumed the ablest commentator in the kingdom would find little encouragement for a similar undertaking ? notwithstanding, as the criticks justly observe, SHAKESPEARE *stands now in more need of a NEW EDITION than ever.*

R. R.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

ADDRESSED TO THE

MONTHLY REVIEWERS.

I Cannot help thinking it a little fortunate, gentlemen, that your observations on Mr. K's Review appeared before the printer had quite finished the foregoing sheets ; as it affords me an opportunity of adding a word or two, by way of reply, to your observations on his *extraordinary* Review. It is indeed not without reason you give it that appellation ; but, pray, do you mean thereby to insinuate that nobody hath a right to make use of the word *Review* but yourselves ? Have you an exclusive privilege to it, like that which is laid to the *Post*, or to the *Gazette* ?

It is true, that you *monthly* gentlemen have the right of prior occupancy over your periodical rivals; who deal, like yourselves, in the wholesale branch of criticism. But, because you are wholesale dealers, are you therefore to be monopolizers? Must every Review extraordinary be stigmatized as an extraordinary Review, because it is not fabricated or vended in your work-shop or warehouse?

It was, doubtless, horridly provoking, to have your work taken out of your hands, and dispatched, while
I you

you were whetting your edge-tools. But why, therefore, find fault with the tools of another artizan, whose work you do not seem to disapprove so much, as his manner of executing it? Surely Dr. J. might as well suffer by a Tomahawk as a cleaver! Is it not as well to be scalped by a Mohawk, as to be knocked on the head, or have one's throat cut, by a carcase-butcher? And pray, how do you differ from the sanguinary assassins of White-chapel and Cow-cross, except that yours are intellectual, and theirs are animal victims? They only mangle the body. You mortify the very soul; and must expect to be mortified in turn. For let me tell you, in the first place, that even your witty conceit of comparing Mr. K. to a Mohawk or a Cherokee, will never be thought your own, by those who recollect the Cherokees and Iroquois that Bishop W. is charged with having set on the back of Dr. Lowth. You critical gentlemen seem indeed to be all terribly mistaken with regard to the place of Mr. K's nativity. The *Critical Reviewers* and *Chroniclers* declared him to be a *Tartar*, and you insist upon his being a Mohawk or a Cherokee Indian. It is a pretty long post-stage from the deserts of Tartary to the wilds of America. We know, indeed, that you speak metaphorically, and, tho' far-fetched, so far it is excusable; but let us see if the hyperbole is not to be found among your other tropes and figures. You say "the *Reviewer* (Mr. K.) seems to be one of those violent assailants, whose aim is not merely to vanquish, but even to *exterminate* his antagonist." It is well you put in that qualifying *seems*. But you say positively, that

that he endeavours to expose his antagonist as a very *pretender* to all literature and science.

This, you say, is quite outrageous.—And so it might be, were it strictly true; but you will please to observe, Mr. K. does not *positively deny* that Dr. Johnson is master of the languages and sciences; he only says, it *does not appear* so to him. Who knows but Mr. K. might here modestly intend to insinuate his own inability to comprehend the amazing stores and vast profundity of Dr. Johnson's science and erudition? Why then would you not give him credit for the appearance of being in so mild and promising a disposition*? Be this, however, as it may, you are certainly mistaken in supposing that Mr. K. hath questioned the abilities of Dr. J. as a man of science, a critick and philologist, merely because the Doctor, as you say, mistook his talents in undertaking an edition of Shakespeare. In reading the preceding sheets,

* And that these criticks might justly have done it, had they been inclined to shew Mr. K. fair play, will appear sufficiently from the passage hinted at, with the note he hath annexed. "I do not say," says Mr. K. "that Dr. Johnson may not probably be well skilled in *some* things; not that *I know* that he is well skilled in any*"; for, though I have read *all* his works, I declare he does not appear to me (at least so far as I myself am able to judge) to be master of any *one* science, or any *one* language. Not that I deny him to be master of the *whole* circle of sciences, and of *all* languages ancient and modern."—Surely, Mr. Monthly Reviewer, it is you that are outrageous! for Mr. K. speaks here with becoming modesty and diffidence.

* I will except, indeed, the article of *literary composition*; in which, so far as the merit of a speech, an essay, a life, or a novel, goes, he is undoubtedly the best writer in Christendom.

you will have seen that, although the violation of Shakeſpeare was the firſt fault for which the Doctör happens to be publickly arraigned, it was by no means the firſt fact in which he had been caught, and for which he would, ſooner or later, have certainly been indicted, by his preſent proſecutor.

But I ſee how the matter ſtands with you, periodical criticks. Your own credit reſts on too tottering a baſis for you to indulge yourſelves ſafely in any inclination you might have to chaſtiſe writers of *eſtabliſhed reputation*. You are therefore reduced, in a manner, to the neceſſity of diſplaying your dexterity in the manual exerciſe of the critical ſcourge, on objects juſt ſtriving to go alone, without any body to ſupport them. This behaviour, doubtleſs, redounds greatly to the honour of your prowels and magnanimity; and as the notice I here take of it, may poſſibly have ſome little effect on your cenſorial dignity, if not on the intereſt of your proprietor, I ſhall take the liberty of giving both him and you a word of advice, for the regulation of your future conduct. I muſt own indeed that the Monthly Review, from its regularity in coming to town for ſo many years, full or empty, hath obtained the reputation of being one of the moſt reſpectable ſtage-coaches on the high-road of Parnaffus; but Mr. G——h, (that is, Mr. *Gee-bo*, the driver) will give me leave to tell him, that, if he continues to detain his paſſengers ſuch a confounded while at Turnham-green, clogging his wheels ſo curſedly with the coom of dullneſs, to make them run ſmooth, ſome other *Jebu*, on the ſame road, will

will infallibly set up a post-coach with steel springs, that will beat him hollow. It is, besides, almost become scandalous now to have the best place in this carriage; for, look at their horses; no fewer than six of them, you see; but how they're matched! black, white, and pye-bald! lame, blind, and spavin'd! The very picture of the mock-cavalcade of the Grand Maçons! Then you see the two fore-horses drag the whole team! An Hammer-smith stage, tugged by a horse and a half, gets a mile a head of them before they reach Hyde-park-corner. I, myself, have even sometimes rode on the coach-box, when Gee-ho, being a good-natured fellow, would let me hold the reins for half-an-hour or so: but I might cry *ay, ay*, till my lungs burst, before I could mend their pace. It was, indeed, a miracle to me, that we ever got in time to town, when I observed that no two horses ever pulled together, and more than one of them hung an arse, and drawed backwards all the way.

But to drop the allegory.

You speak of Mr. K's having treated Dr. J. with extraordinary *freedoms*.—Pray, Sir, who is Dr. J. that Mr. K. may not treat him, at his own peril, with as much freedom as he pleases? If S. J. be *artium magister*, W. K. is *philosophiae doctor*, and so far upon a footing. If S. J. be L. L. D., W. K. is J. U. D. If Mr. K. also was not educated at the universities that complimented him with his degrees, Dr. J. stands in the same predicament with regard to those learned seminaries that dignified him with his. There is, to be sure, this difference between the two doctors, that the latter

latter never has thought it worth while, like the former, to advertise such insignificant circumstances in the magazines and news-papers, holding in very slight estimation such literary endowments, as may be purchased at a Scotch university for ten pounds; at almost any German one for twenty ducats; and may be had, as Dr. H. knows, from L——th, merely at the moving solicitation of a printer.

Again, you ask, Sir, whether Mr. K. is not apprehensive, on account of his severity, of sharing the fate of Tom Osborne? That is, in plain terms, of Dr. J's *knocking him down*. This is, to be sure, a very concise and *liberal* method of determining literary merit, and possibly may have some effect on the Monthly Reviewers. This intimidating intimation, indeed, may in some measure serve to account for the tremendous influence of Dr. J's personal and literary authority in general. For who will hesitate to commend, or dare to contend against, a writer possessed of such *knock-me-down* * arguments? You will please to take this along with you, however, that, although Mr. K. may not have such terrific talents, nor be quite so much of a *brute* † as many more celebrated writers, he may pos-

* See Foote's Minor.

† See an ingenious copy of verses, lately published in the St. James's Chronicle, wherein the Dr. is proved, on the confession of his own friends, to be, indeed, the *Prince of beasts*; a conclusion at which neither Dr. J. nor his friends could reasonably take offence, one of them having thought proper, in a copy of verses before printed in the same paper, very politely to compare Mr. K. and his friends to a parcel of *monkies*; and, at the same time, to liken the surly grumbling of the Dr. himself to the contemptuous growling of the *lion*. This versifier, however, affords not the *first* example, wherein the ear of pusillanimity hath been deceived by the

sibly be found, on trial, as much of a *man*, in every respect, as the best of them.

Could you imagine then, Mr. *Montbly*, that Mr. K. would not resent that partiality which you have evidently betrayed in your remarks on *his* Review. This partiality is the more evident from your very different and favourable construction of the stile and manner of a pamphlet recently published against one of the gentlemen attacked by Mr. K. I mean Dr. L—th's Letter to Dr. W———n; the acrimony, severity, and scurrility of which are, in every respect, much greater than is to be found in the strictures of Mr. K. on Dr. J. And yet this is with you the *elegant* and unexceptionable production of a *gentle* and amiable writer, displaying equally the abilities of the scholar and the gentleman. Nay, you yourself, Mr. Critick, have quoted some passages, wherein the language and allusions are as *low* as possible, and, indeed, hardly grammatical. What do you think of this writer's accusing a bishop of the church, in plain terms, with having been guilty "of *sneering* at the original Scriptures; with making use of far-fetched conceit and "forced pleasantry, void of wit, of meaning, of "common sense, and *common decency* : with using "low banter, illiberal burlesque upon the prophets, "the apostles, and the holy Scriptures." You will

the braying of an ass in a lion's skin. How far Dr. J. may be compared to such an animal so disguised, time will shew, Mr. K. not having begun to strip off that skin, but with a determined resolution to exhibit the real creature, sooner or later, in *puris naturalibus*.

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please to observe, that such a charge as this, brought against such a character, is not only scurrilous, but, if false, is, to the last degree, base and injurious. And, pray, how is the truth of such problematic accusations to be proved? Who is to judge whether the passages, hinted at in Dr. W's writings be such *low banter* and *illiberal burlesque* or not? Is Dr. L— himself to judge of this, or you, Mr. Monthly Reviewer? Give me leave to say, you will find no such *equivocal* accusations brought by Mr. K. against Dr. J. If he hath charged him with being *ignorant* and *inattentive*, he hath given repeated proofs of the truth of his assertion. If he hath called Dr. J. *indolent*, *self-sufficient*, or *arrogant*, is he not notoriously all these? If Mr. K. hath, at any time, suggested the Doctor's want of *apprehension* or *invention*, he hath in like manner proved it. After all which, I would be glad to know where is the illiberality or scurrility of Mr. K's laughing at him, and calling him *dull*; nay, even though he should insinuate that he hath no more imagination than a leaden plummet, and say he was the *dullest animal of all commentators*. For, pray, where is the harm of all this, even whether it be true or false? That the Doctor is a commentator, such a one as he is, nobody will deny: that he is an *animal*, and a very strange one too, every body will own: and, as *dullness*, even in the highest or lowest degree, is by no means criminal, I cannot see how reflections of this kind can be, with any consistent pretence to impartiality, be deemed illiberal and scurrilous by criticks, who have admitted the above instance, quoted from Dr. L. to be elegant, refined,

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or polite. It is true that Mr. K. hath strongly insinuated, that Dr. J. hath not done justice either to his subscribers, or to the proprietors, in his edition of Shakespeare : And hath not he proved it? Nay, doth not the event of its publication sufficiently shew that he had no need to have given himself the trouble to prove what all the world admit to be true? If, on this account, he hath treated Dr. J. severely, the Doctor hath just the same right of complaint as a pickpocket, who gets only horse-whipped, or pumped, instead of a severer punishment. Ought not the Doctor to do as he does, shake his ears, sink quietly off, and think himself happy *it is no worse?*

It is true Mr. K. hath charged Dr. J. with an invidious design of detracting from the moral and religious character of Shakespeare. But in what manner has he done this?—Not by a mere verbally-abusive declaration of the fact in general ; but by a spirited and fair allegation, supported by particular testimonies.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, Mr. K. truly, is with you an *Orlando Furioso* in criticism, a very *Mohawk*, a *Cherokee*, and what not *.

A word more, and I have done. You have been pleased to express some reluctance at spreading what

* Surely this instance of the *Monthly Reviewer's* partiality toward Mr. K. will sufficiently obviate the foolish suspicions of the Candid Reviewers and others, of his being *himself* connected with that work. What, because a man may have been accidentally obliged to take up his lodgings in a stable, is he to be deemed an horse, or an ossifer, for ever after? Misfortune may bring a man acquainted, as Trinculo says, with strange bed-fellows; but it is his own fault if he does not change his companions with his circumstances.

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you term *personalities*. There are many gentlemen also, to whose judgment Mr. K. is ready to pay the greatest deference, who express themselves, on the present occasion, in the same strain. Nay, even some of Dr. J's friends good-naturedly affect, like the *Monthly Reviewers*, to think Mr. K. hath forgot "the respect due to his own rank in the republick of letters," by descending, as they call it, to *such personalities*. But, if they say this of the author of the *Review of Dr. J's Shakespeare*, what will they say of the author of this *Defence* of it?—Doubtless, ten times worse; but I care not.—As to all those, who are justly reprehended in this pamphlet, they will of course exclaim loudly against my having exposed the petty *particulars* of their pitiful and disingenuous conduct with regard to Mr. K. and his writings. They will naturally cry it down as *low*, as *il'iberal*, and so forth. It is not for the interest of *offenders* that their actions should be too *minutely* scrutinized; they must unanimously plead for the use of *general* reflections only, in order that the accusation may, "like a wild-goose, fly, unclaimed of any man;" but the justice due to the individual *person* injured, claims a like peculiar retaliation of *personalities*. It were a degradation, indeed, of any man's character to become a common thief-taker or informer; but it can be none for him to seize or prosecute those, who may have meanly picked his own pocket, or basely attempted to assassinate his friend. It would redound, in like manner, little to the honour of a man of rank or fortune, to stoop so low as to go to boxing with a Slack or a Broughton; but,

but, perhaps, the first nobleman in the kingdom would not be displeased to possess their athletic abilities: in which case, I apprehend, the world would think it no impeachment of his dignity, if, highly provoked, he should for once wave his privilege, and chastise the offender, of what rank so ever, at his own weapons. And thus, even supposing Mr. K's enthusiastic plea of *justifying the dead* should, in the more prudential opinion of the *living*, be condemned as chimerical; he hath, at *worst*, only indulged his *passions* at the expence of his *politeness*, and waved his pretensions as "the *scholar* and the *gentleman*," to *expose* his abilities as a MAN, *gentle* or *simple*, as the reader may determine.

In the mean time, nothing could be more unbecoming Mr. K. than, through meanness or affectation, to sue for that determination in his favour, which the publick, without knowing it, have, in a great degree, already made. For, however *unnecessarily particular* I may be thought to have been in the foregoing sheets, the publick are yet to learn the principal motives of that confidence, which Mr. K. seems, on their suffrage, to have assumed.

The *Reviewer of Dr. Johnson's Shakespeare*, indeed, hath too long and too successfully laboured in the literary vineyard *, to need *now*, by any servile or sinister means, to solicit his reward. No: the small portion

* *Like a MOLE*, says the ingenious and sarcastical author of the *Traveller*. This troglodite, however, hath now made his appearance above-ground; and possibly Mr. G. (as well as Dr. J.) wishes he had remained working like a *mole* still.

of literary fame, to which Mr. K. hath at any time made, or hereafter may make, pretensions, he claims, with proper deference to the publick, not as a *favour*, but as his *due*. He thinks it not less disgraceful to *beg* of the multitude than of an individual; and as he would not willingly *give* undeserved applause to *others*, he scorns to *accept* it *himself*. His demands are few, and his expectations *moderate*; but, such as they are, he hath sufficient reason to think they will be complied with; for, in spite of artifice and cabal †, sooner or later, the PUBLICK *will be* JUST.

R. R.

† Yet to so great a height is this spirit of caballing carried; that, if a speedy check be not put to it, the publick must soon be content with such entertainment as is catered for them by a junto of opulent printers and booksellers. The reader will hardly believe it possible, yet so it is, that I applied myself, with regard to the present performance, to near half a dozen different publishers, before I could find one who would venture to sell a pamphlet, *reflecting*, as they said, on the respectable and tremendous compilers and printers of the *Reviews*, *Magazines*, and *Evening Chronicles*. Such is the present state of literature! in which, it is in vain that the *liberty of the press* is secured by law, when the publication of what is printed (and even the printing what is written, unless a man hath a press of his own) may be prevented by the combinations of printers and booksellers.

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